
DE News

August 31, 2001 – Iowa Department of Education – Ted Stilwill, Director

Celebrate literacy

Emphasizing the importance of basic literacy skills for success in life and work, Governor Tom Vilsack has declared September as Literacy Month in Iowa.

We are fortunate that providing basic literacy skills for all Iowa children and adults remains a top education priority among our lawmakers. This is an ideal time for you all to collaborate with your communities to establish strong literacy programs for all their students and citizens as a basic need for quality of life and the health of our economy.

For more information, please visit the Iowa Literacy Resource Center website at <http://www.readiowa.org>; or contact Sally Schroeder in our agency, at 515/281-3640.

Kirkwood gets \$3 million grant

Kirkwood Community College, sponsor of AgKnowledge, The National Center for AgriScience Education has been awarded a \$3,000,000 grant by the National Science Foundation. This funding is for administration, curriculum development, faculty development and capacity building activities of AgKnowledge. The main objective of this center is to institutionalize science, math and technology into community college agriculture programs across the nation. More information about the center can be found at www.agknow.org.

Play nice and be safe

A conference on “Playgrounds: How safe is yours?” is planned for Thursday, September 27, at the Robert A. Lee Community Recreation Center in Iowa City. Sponsored by Iowa Playground Safety Network, this conference is offered to help educate those associated with playgrounds about safety, planning and accessibility. School Administrators, teachers, custodians, parents and board members are invited.

Registration materials have been sent to schools in the area. A follow-up conference is planned in Des Moines in October. The fee for the conference is \$30.00 per person including lunch, breaks and materials. CEUS may be available for an additional fee. For More information contact Milt Wilson, Consultant, School Facilities, 515/281-4743, email milt.wilson@ed.state.ia.us

Tax teaching manual available on web

Understanding Iowa Taxes (UIT), the teaching manual supplied by the Iowa Department of Revenue and Finance, will no longer be available due to budget constraints. As a result, increased attention has been given to online services, including filing the IA 1040A. Visit our website at www.state.ia.us/tax and go to e-services to find our WebFile link. Teachers who have received the UIT in the past will receive a postcard encouraging WebFile as an option for educating students about filing state taxes.

Lawmakers go “Back to School”

Lawmakers from throughout the United States will visit classrooms during America's Legislators Back to School Week, September 17 through 21. Iowa's lawmakers may be contacting their local school principals and teachers to participate in the program. The program encourages lawmakers to meet personally with their young constituents and to answer questions, share ideas, listen to concerns, and impart a greater understanding of the legislative processes that are the cornerstone for developing effective public policy. The program is supported by several organizations including the National Conference of State Legislatures, Center for Civic Education, Close Up Foundation, National Council for the Social Studies, National Education Association, American Association of School Administrators, National Association of Elementary School Principals, National Association of Secondary School Principals, and Reading Recovery Council of North America. It is a program of the Trust for Representative Democracy of the National Conference of State Legislatures. Additional information about the program is available on the Internet at: www.ncsl.org/public/civiced.htm.

Iowa Campus Compact is launched

After months of organization work, The Iowa Campus Compact has launched, with the host site set at Drake University. Bob Burns, from the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, has been hired as Executive Director. In addition to working with Iowa service learning and community service faculty and staff, he will partner with Greta Weiss, our new state VISTA coordinator, who will oversee the activities of a network of VISTA volunteers posted at college, community college, and university campuses across the state (VISTA slots are still available for interested member campuses). Please direct questions to Bob Burns, Executive Director of Iowa Campus Compact, or Greta Weiss, Americorps/VISTA Coordinator, 119 Howard Hall, Drake University, Des Moines, IA 50311; 515/271-2180; robert.burns@drake.edu.

Student volunteer awards available

Applications are now available for the 2002 Prudential Spirit of Community Awards, which recognize middle and high school students who have performed outstanding acts of volunteer work in their communities. Applications are due by October 31 to the National Association of Secondary School Principals. More information is available by calling 888/450-9961, or visiting principals.org or prudential.com/community/spirit.

Teacher excellence recognized

Several Iowa teachers were recognized as state finalists in the 2001 Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching. Congratulations to Denise Carlson, Gilbert Elementary; Colleen Confer, West Elementary (Glenwood); Virginia Elliot, STC Intermediate (Tama); Linda Kuiken, Central Academy (Des Moines); Angelia Shindelar, Nodaway Valley Middle (Fontanelle); Jodi Osthus, Meredith Middle (Des Moines); Peter Bruecken, Bettendorf High; Julie Townsend, Parkview Middle (Ankeny); and Kennon Schaefer, Mason City High.

Redefinition of High School report available

Redefinition of High School: A Vision for Iowa, developed by member districts of the Urban Education Network, offers a vision of sweeping change in Iowa's high schools. This comprehensive report provides a solid information base organized around 12 priority topics, including strategies and action steps, for transforming high schools. The vision is to review and redefine the role of the high school in the 21st century.

This timely report is available for \$20 on a first-come, first-served basis to interested organizations and individuals. Send your request directly to Urban Education Network of Iowa, 2124 Grand Avenue, Des Moines, IA 50312.

Welcome

Michael Hupfer has been named president of Iowa Lakes Community College, beginning Jan. 1, 2002. He currently is vice president of human resources at Des Moines Area Community College.

Don't miss these DE website updates

Federal Class Size Reduction

Here you'll find the application and guidance documents needed to access federal funds for public school districts to support class size reduction, kindergarten through grade 3. The application is DUE to the Iowa Department of Education September 25, 2001. Please read all materials.

At-Risk Allowable Growth Letter

The program application for at-risk allowable growth funding will now be included in the Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP). This document contains information that will allow school districts to determine actions they need to take with regard to program application and budgets for at-risk allowable growth funding.

Vision Iowa School Infrastructure Program

The Iowa Department of Education is pleased to announce the availability of the 2001 grant application for School Infrastructure Projects as part of the Vision Iowa School Infrastructure Program. This \$50 million state program is in its second year to assist school districts in replacing and improving their school buildings. The grants, to be awarded on a competitive basis, are open to Iowa public school districts. The maximum award a district can receive is the lesser of \$1,000,000 or the total capital investment of the district minus the required local match. A total of \$20 million will be available in 2001. Funds must be used for school infrastructure projects such as purchasing, building, furnishing, reconstructing, repairing, improving or remodeling a schoolhouse or schoolhouses. Applications must be postmarked or received at the Iowa Department of education by 4:30 p.m., **October 31, 2001.**

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